General Assembly

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Fifty-fifth session
Agenda item 103

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/55/591)*]

55/57. International Year of Volunteers

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 52/17 of 20 November 1997, in which it proclaimed the year 2001 as the International Year of Volunteers, and also recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/44 of 22 July 1997,

Recalling also the outcome document of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly,[1] entitled "World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalizing world", held at Geneva from 26 June to 1 July 2000, in which the General Assembly recommended the promotion of the involvement of volunteers in social development, inter alia, by encouraging Governments, taking into account the views of all actors, to develop comprehensive strategies and programmes by raising public awareness about the value and opportunities of voluntarism and by facilitating an enabling environment for individuals and other actors of civil society to engage in, and the private sector to support, voluntary activities,

Welcoming the decision of the Commission for Social Development, at its thirty-eighth session, to include the subject of volunteering in the provisional agenda for its thirty-ninth session,[2]

Taking into account the valuable contribution of volunteering to both economic and social development,

Bearing in mind that volunteering is one of the important ways in which people participate in societal development,

1. *Welcomes* the activities undertaken by States, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations and the United Nations system for the promotion of volunteerism and, specifically, in preparation for the observance of the International Year of Volunteers, and encourages them to continue their efforts;

[1] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-fourth Special Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/S-24/8/Rev.1), chap. III.
[2] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2000, Supplement No. 6* and corrigendum (E/2000/26 and Corr.1), chap. I, sect. B.

2. *Calls upon* States to promote, especially during the Year, an environment conducive to the discussion, at the national and local levels, of the characteristics and trends of volunteer action in their own societies, including the major challenges which the Year can help to address, and to incorporate the subject of volunteering into high-level and other meetings and events during 2001;

3. *Invites* States to consider all means available for more people to become involved in voluntary action and to be drawn from a broader cross-section of society, especially from groups, including young people, older people and people with disabilities, in view of the benefits accruing to volunteers through volunteer action;

4. *Encourages* Governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, eminent persons and other relevant actors to take all possible measures to promote volunteer action, especially during the Year, in particular at the local level, and in cooperation with, inter alia, local authorities, community leaders, the media and schools;

5. *Encourages* organizations of the United Nations system to pay attention to the Year in their regular work and in their relevant meetings and to continue to collaborate with the United Nations Volunteers programme as focal point for the Year to ensure that the contributions of volunteers in their own areas of concern are fully recognized;

6. *Requests* the Commission for Social Development to make appropriate suggestions and recommendations to the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, to further the contribution of volunteering to social development;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit his note[3] transmitting the contribution of the United Nations Volunteers programme to the preparations for the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, entitled "World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalizing world", as a document of the thirty-ninth session of the Commission for Social Development, and requests him, furthermore, to disseminate it widely within the United Nations system, including by making it available to the Commission on Human Settlements acting as the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the Habitat Agenda, the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly for follow-up to the World Summit for Children, the preparatory committee for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-fifth session;

8. *Decides* that two plenary meetings of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly shall be devoted to volunteering, to coincide with the close of the International Year of Volunteers on 5 December 2001, and in this regard requests the Secretary-General to prepare a report on ways in which Governments and the United Nations system could support volunteering for discussion on that occasion;

[3] A/AC.253/16/Add.7.

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session on the outcome of the International Year of Volunteers and its follow-up.

81st plenary meeting
4 December 2000